

# ALEX PADILLA

U.S. SENATOR *for* CALIFORNIA

## **Hispanic Educational Resources and Empowerment (HERE) Act of 2022**

In 2020-2021, a decrease in higher education enrollment among Latino students during the pandemic caused the number of Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) in our country to decline for the first time in 20 years, from 569 to 559. The decrease in higher education enrollment among Latino students during the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need to invest in our Latino youth.

The “HERE Act” would authorize a new \$150 million grant program to support partnerships between HSIs and school districts with high enrollments of Latinos for the purpose of improving postsecondary educational attainment of Latino students.

### **Specifically, the HERE Act:**

Directs the Department of Education to (1) award grants to HSIs to improve and expand innovative collaboration agreements between local educational agencies and HSIs to better serve Latino students, (2) provide technical assistance to such HSIs, and (3) contract with a third party to conduct an independent evaluation of grant activities. Grants must be used for specific activities, such as:

- Creating a college-going culture, including promoting early exposure to students and their families to opportunities and requirements of postsecondary education.
- Improvements to school-based and institutional practices to prepare students for postsecondary education and to provide high quality postsecondary supports.
- Supporting students through the college application and transition process.
- Addressing non-academic needs that are barriers to college enrollment, persistence, and completion, including child care and food insecurity.
- Developing and offering “grow your own” programs that encourage students to pursue teaching as a profession.

**This bill has been endorsed by:** the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, University of California, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, the School Superintendents Association, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, California Community Colleges, and Los Angeles Community College District.